

been achieved and what more needs to be done.

I have always believed that as we advance and defend our national interests around the globe we must also fulfill our moral obligations. As chairman or ranking member of the subcommittee that funds the Department of State and foreign operations for over two decades, I have had a unique vantage point from which to watch globalization evolve and test our Nation's commitment to its ideals. As the world's population swells, technology advances, and competition for energy and natural resources intensifies, the rights and needs of indigenous populations are threatened by governments and corporations seeking to exploit the ground on which they have built their lives and preserved their cultures and the wealth beneath it.

This has been the reality for too many indigenous cultures, and it is no surprise that they are among the most vulnerable and disenfranchised populations on Earth. These groups have distinct ways of life and histories, tied to land they have inhabited and protected for thousands of years. But their established roots rarely afford them representation in governments that hide behind laws and regulations proclaiming equal treatment for indigenous populations who have virtually no role in the political process.

Recognizing that indigenous peoples have unique rights and needs that the rest of humanity has a responsibility to protect, several years ago I undertook to create the position of advisor for indigenous peoples' issues at the U.S. Agency for International Development. I am pleased that USAID recently established this office to implement and coordinate a comprehensive, U.S. Government strategy on indigenous peoples, with specific goals, guidelines, benchmarks, and impact assessments, including support for indigenous peoples' organizations.

The selection of Brian Keane to fill this role is an early indicator that it will be addressed proactively. Brian, who has devoted his professional life to these issues, will work to ensure that U.S. Government policies and programs around the world are carried out in a manner that respects the rights of indigenous peoples and responds to their needs. Brian's work in indigenous communities all across the globe, and his advocacy on behalf of indigenous peoples to inform international policy making, has prepared him for his task.

This position must not be merely a symbolic post. From the Amazon rainforest to the Kalahari Desert, indigenous peoples have for centuries faced existential threats due to racism, greed, misguided policies of forced assimilation, and indifference. However, for the surviving groups, the length of their struggle belies the acuteness of the threat. In Brazil, the Guarani people have been driven from their land and are plagued by alcoholism, poverty, and a suicide rate many times the

national average, replaced by expanding sugarcane farms.

Anthropologists explain that the loss of land by indigenous groups often leads to social disintegration and economic dependence on the state, as we know only too well from our own experience. We see it in places like Botswana, where the San people, traditionally nomads, have been uprooted from their ancestral lands to make way for diamond mines, forced into settlements, and exposed to HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. Their way of life, which the Botswana Government should be protecting, instead is being destroyed.

The circumstances of each indigenous culture, whose members total as many as 400 million people worldwide, differs from continent to continent but they face similar threats. To defend their rights, protect their land, and preserve their cohesiveness, a key policy change is needed. We must commit to honoring the principle of free, prior, and informed consent.

For too long, governments, often including our own, have paid lip service to consulting native populations as a substitute for obtaining their consent for actions that directly affect them. More often than not, such consultations have been cursory or conducted in a manner that divides members of indigenous communities against each other. I am pleased that in 2010 President Obama formally declared our Nation's support for the U.N. Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, reversing the position that the United States had held since the declaration's adoption in 2007.

While that was a positive step, combatting discrimination against indigenous peoples requires more than policy statements, it requires action. That is why I want to highlight the ongoing threat to these populations and call attention to the new position of advisor for indigenous peoples' issues.

In today's globalized world, ensuring the rights of indigenous peoples is everyone's responsibility. Respect for their rights is not only necessary for their continued survival as distinct cultures but also to help ensure the well-being of the entire planet. Whether we are talking about biodiversity protection, climate change or sustainable development, indigenous peoples have much to offer. Their ancestral knowledge, developed over millennia, has been vital to preserving what is left of the world's critical ecosystems and can play a key role in finding solutions to challenges that humanity is currently facing.

I look forward to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly that will take place at the United Nations in September of this year. Its main objective is to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples and to pursue the objectives of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The World Con-

ference provides an important chance to give real meaning to the principles expressed in the declaration and is a historic opportunity for the United States to lead the international community by putting forward a concrete plan of action aimed at ensuring that the collective rights of indigenous peoples, including the right to free, prior and informed consent, are recognized and respected.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I wish to speak about the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP. I am joined on the floor today by my friend Senator BAUCUS, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, to stress the program's importance.

Today CHIP provides health coverage to over 37,000 children in West Virginia and over 8 million children across the United States in working families who cannot afford private health insurance. These kids deserve a healthy start in life. They are our future leaders and decisionmakers. They deserve the opportunities this program provides.

Mr. BAUCUS. I thank Senator ROCKEFELLER for speaking today on this important issue. I have always admired the Senator's hard work and dedication to provide health coverage not just to the children of West Virginia but children across the United States. He has been a real inspiration to me and many of our colleagues.

Back in 2007 and 2009, Senator ROCKEFELLER and I worked together with fellow Democrats and Republicans to reauthorize CHIP. The legislation brought legislators together from both sides of the aisle because CHIP was not about politics, it was about helping kids. Even 10 years prior to that, the original legislation that created the Children's Health Insurance Program passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. CHIP has always been very popular. Bottom line is this program works. It works for children and it works for America.

Unfortunately, while this program has been authorized through the year 2019, the funding expires next year. I believe it is critical for the Senate to continue to fund CHIP beyond 2015 in order to continue to provide essential health coverage to our lower income children and pregnant women. I regret I will not be here to carry on the work of helping these families.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. I agree with Senator BAUCUS. Without the funds to run this program, millions of children will lose health care coverage. Before CHIP was established in 1997, 23 percent of low-income children were uninsured. Today, according to the Urban Institute, that number has dropped to 12.8 percent. I believe that number should be zero; no child should be without access to the coverage they need to grow up healthy and happy. Thanks to this program and other sources of coverage, we are on our way to achieving

full coverage: more than 9 out of 10 American children now are insured.

Studies have shown that children enrolled in CHIP have demonstrated improvements in their ability to pay attention in class, school attendance, reading scores, and participation in school and childhood activities.

Our efforts are working but we must do more. We must continue to work to enroll kids who are eligible but not yet covered. We must ensure that funding for this essential lifeline for families does not expire. I, too, regret I will no longer be in the Senate in 2015 to continue this work. That is why I hope that we can solve the problem this year, and I am very glad my good friend, the senior Senator from Montana, and I could come to the floor today to deliver this important message.

VOTE EXPLANATIONS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, due to my flight being canceled, I regret having missed a vote on February 3, 2014. Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of the motion to invoke cloture on the conference report to accompany H.R. 2642, a bill to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam President, due to an unanticipated family emergency, I was unable to cast a vote on February 3, 2014, relative to rollcall vote No. 20 to invoke cloture on the conference report to accompany H.R. 2642, the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

2014 OLYMPIANS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, today I wish to recognize the great accomplishments of the many New Hampshire athletes who will be representing the United States this month in the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. These athletes have all exhibited incredible dedication to their respective sports and have proven their remarkable abilities in competitions among their peers. A selection to the U.S. Olympic team is a tremendous honor and a fitting reward for their many years of hard work.

In New Hampshire, growing up on the snow is a way of life. With access to the unparalleled beauty and terrain of the White Mountains, thousands of miles of trails, and nearly 1,000 lakes, Granite Staters are at home on the snow, on the ice, and in the air.

New Hampshire is proud to acknowledge our State's Olympians and is excited to show the world their talents during the Sochi games.

Nick Alexander of Lebanon, NH, will be competing in ski jumping. As the 2013 U.S. National Champion on the K90 ski jump, we are excited to see Nick

build on his impressive showings at the Continental Cup and National Large Hill Championships as he competes for Team USA.

Sean Doherty of Center Conway, NH, will be competing in the biathlon. We hope to see Sean, a first-time Olympian, continue his accomplishments from the International Biathlon Union Junior World Championships last year and excel at this year's Olympics.

Nick Fairall of Andover, NH, will be competing in ski jumping. As a first-time representative of Team USA, we have been impressed with Nick's performances in World Cup events and his victory at the National Large Hill Championships. We are looking forward to watching him compete on the Olympic stage.

Julia Ford, of Holderness, NH will be competing in alpine skiing. A first-time member of Team USA, we hope to see Julia perform as she did in the U.S. Championships and North American Cup races. As the 2011 NorAm downhill Super G and super combined champion and 2012 NorAm overall and downhill champion, we are eager to cheer Julia on in Sochi.

Kris Freeman of Thornton, NH, will be competing in cross-country skiing. As a well-decorated Nordic skier and representative of Team USA for the fourth time, I hope that Kris will be able to build upon his past experiences and excel at this year's Winter Olympics. We are proud to have Kris representing New Hampshire once again.

Chas Guldmond of Laconia, NH, will be competing in snowboarding. A first-time member of Team USA, Chas has built an impressive resume in slopestyle competitions, and we hope that his success will continue in his Olympic debut.

Julia Krass of Hanover, NH, will be competing in freeskiing. A first-time participant in the Olympics, we are excited to watch 16-year-old Julia compete in the inaugural ski slopestyle event.

Bode Miller of Franconia, NH, will be competing in alpine skiing. As the most decorated US male skier in World Cup history and five-time representative of Team USA, Granite Staters are excited to see Bode compete again and hope to see him repeat his impressive, three-medal performance from the 2010, Vancouver Olympics.

Leanne Smith of North Conway, NH, will be competing in alpine skiing. As a representative of Team USA for the second time, we hope that the combination of her previous Olympic experience and her success in recent World Cup events translates into victory this year.

DJ Montigny of Dover, NH, will be coaching three women on the freeskiing team. A first time coach at the Olympics, DJ was named Freeskiing International Coach of the Year in 2013. We look forward to DJ helping lead Team USA athletes to victory in Sochi.

Many additional Olympians have been educated, coached, trained, or even competed in New Hampshire. These athletes with Granite State ties include Kacey Bellamy, Team USA, ice hockey; Sophie Caldwell, Team USA, cross-country skiing; David Chodounsky, Team USA, alpine skiing; Hannah Dreissigacker, Team USA, biathlon; Susan Dunklee, Team USA, biathlon; Nolan Kasper, Team USA, alpine skiing; Hannah Kearney, Team USA, freestyle skiing; James Van Riemsdyk, Team USA, ice hockey; Ida Sargent, Team USA, cross-country skiing; Mikaela Shiffrin, Team USA, alpine skiing; Katey Stone, Team USA, Head Coach, ice hockey; Sara Studebaker, Team USA, biathlon; and Andrew Weibrecht, Team USA, alpine skiing.

It is my honor to congratulate these New Hampshire athletes. I wish each of them and all of Team USA the best of luck as they seek to bring home the gold at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.

PITTSBURGH OPERA'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, today I wish to recognize the Pittsburgh Opera on their 75th anniversary. Since its founding by five dedicated women in 1939, the Pittsburgh Opera has consistently worked to foster new generations of artists and fans by making opera accessible to a diverse audience. The stated mission of the Pittsburgh Opera is "to culturally enrich Pittsburgh and the tri-state area, and to draw national and international attention to the region". Roughly 31,000 people attend one of their five opera productions each year.

Over time, the Pittsburgh Opera established its own orchestra, has become a leader in the use of supertitles, and forming the Resident Artists Program to train young artists and increase awareness of opera, developing community programming throughout southwestern Pennsylvania. In so doing, the company has served not only Pittsburgh and the tristate area, but has become a respected national organization, attracting such luminaries as Luciano Pavarotti, Beverly Sills and Joan Sutherland.

The Pittsburgh Opera has also been an invaluable steward for the future of opera and Pittsburgh's arts culture through its focus on environmental sustainability and fiscal management. In 2008, the company moved to new headquarters in the historic George Westinghouse Air Brake Factory, a cultural landmark that became the oldest LEED-certified building in Pittsburgh in 2011, making the Pittsburgh Opera the first opera company in the United States to receive LEED certification in the operations and maintenance category.